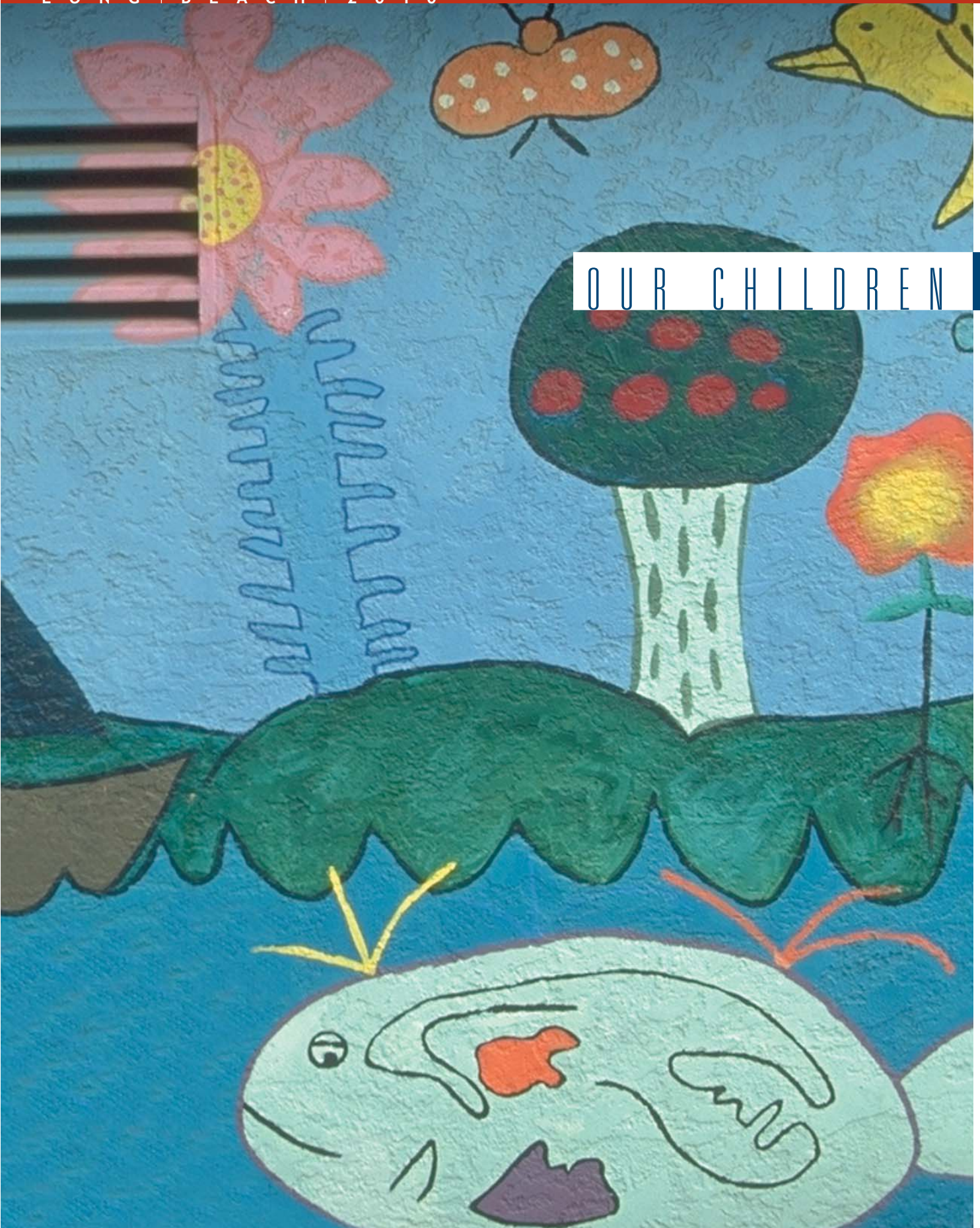


O U R C H I L D R E N



AND SCHOOLS

“Long Beach has clearly expressed its desire to make the well-being of youth a top priority. If we ensure the success of our children, the prospects for strong neighborhoods, a safe city, economic prosperity and a healthy environment will be far better. If we fail our children, none of our other goals will be realized.”

— Jean Egan,

Chair, Education and Youth Task Force

Many people believe that the overall health of a community can be measured in the way it treats its youth.

Youth in Long Beach face many challenges. One-third of Long Beach children live in poverty. The demand for childcare exceeds the supply by more than 10,000 spaces. Educational test results are below the state and national averages. Five Long Beach zip codes are among the state's hot spots for teenage pregnancy. Our youth programs and services need to be better coordinated among government and private providers.

In the next decade, we must create a city where children and youth of diverse backgrounds live in safe and nurturing communities, with access to comprehensive, culturally sensitive programs and services that make them healthy, happy and well-educated, preparing them to become successful, responsible, and contributing members of the community.

Goal 1: Maintain a citywide focus on improving the well-being of youth and families

We need citywide partnerships, oversight, planning, and measurements of Long Beach's efforts to improve the well-being of our youth. Action steps:

- Create a city Youth Commission with representatives from government and private agencies, which will develop a Youth Scorecard to monitor and evaluate the well-being of our youth.
- Form a working group including the Mayor, City Manager, School Superintendent, and representatives of nonprofit and religious youth service providers to address youth issues, including the maximum use of City and school facilities by youth.
- Increase the City's budget and staff for coordination of youth programs and increase the authority of staff to work in partnership with non-City organizations.
- Publicize available services for youth and families through newsletters, websites, and public media.
- Increase transportation options for youth to attend programs and services and work with Long Beach Transit to find low-cost providers.

Goal 2: Improve youth's physical, mental, and dental health

We must make sure all eligible children have health insurance and offer more services to those who do not. We must improve prenatal care, overall youth fitness and nutrition, and increase immunizations, while reducing teen pregnancy, disease, disability, and death among Long Beach's kids. Action step:

- Organize a collaborative effort among Long Beach and Los Angeles County government and community-based youth health-care providers, led by the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services. Representatives of these agencies will coordinate their efforts to promote utilization and expansion of available healthcare resources and report progress to the new Youth Commission.

Goal 3: Make sure that every child enters school ready to learn

Research shows that early childhood experiences strongly affect how people function, from preschool through adulthood, so it is critical to ensure quality childcare and early childhood development. Action steps:

- Expand childcare training programs and increase the number of providers completing programs by 30 percent.

- Assign responsibility to the Childcare Coordinator in Long Beach's Department of Health and Human Services to create a citywide plan to provide quality childcare, including an employment registry for providers, and report progress to the Youth Commission.
- Seek funding for more Family Resource Centers and other community-based facilities that help pre-kindergarten children.
- Increase and publicize programs for children ages 0-5, offered by the Departments of Parks, Recreation & Marine, Library Services, and Health & Human Services.

Goal 4: Support efforts to increase the number of students meeting high academic standards

To ensure a bright future for Long Beach, we need high quality education for our youth. Our institutions must stay at the forefront of standards-based reform and "seamless education" from kindergarten through college. Action Steps:

- Continue Long Beach Unified School District's focus on high academic standards, communicate this focus to parents and students, and expand after-school tutoring to help students achieve these standards.
- Help the School District, Long Beach Community College, and California State University Long Beach expand their "seamless education" activities, including faculty-teacher collaboration, improved teacher preparation and advancement by School District students to higher education.
- Make sure educational institutions work with the City, the Long Beach Conservation Corps, and the federal Job Corps to help out-of-school youth complete educational requirements.



Goal 5: Increase youth engagement in productive activities

Constructive activities after school, during evenings, and on weekends increase positive behavior and development. We need to provide programs to more youth and improve the educational quality of programs offered. Action steps:

- Support and provide more funding for collaborative projects to enhance and increase after-school, weekend and off-track youth programs.
- Support and expand mentoring programs, encouraging older students to support younger students.
- The Office of the Mayor will hold an annual celebration of youth mentoring.

Goal 6: Increase involvement of parents (and other principal caregivers) in support of children

The loving involvement of parents and guardians is also an essential ingredient for a child's success and contributes to the community by fostering positive values. We seek to increase family programming, family support services and family-school-community partnerships.

Action steps:

- Provide the Childcare Coordinator additional staff to start a program to increase parental involvement with their children and report on progress to the Youth Commission.
- The PTA will evaluate parent involvement at every school and recommend parent/family involvement policies and programs to the Board of Education and Youth Commission.

- The School District will increase the number of community schools by collaborating with schools, parents, and community agencies.
- California State University Long Beach will incorporate parent-school-community partnering activities into its teacher-training program.

Goal 7: Increase youth readiness for jobs, college, and productive post-high school pursuits

Preparing youth for adulthood is critical to our community's future. We aim to improve work force and college readiness skills, heighten career awareness, strengthen the connection between youth and the community and offer more services for youth facing special barriers.

Action steps:

- The Mayor will form a Youth Council of the Workforce Development Board to address work force needs and convey information to Long Beach youth.

- The Training and Employment Division of the Community Development Department and its partners will establish a state-of-the-art center for disadvantaged, at-risk youth, which will offer a full range of job preparation and support services.
- The City, its educational institutions, and the School-to-Career Consortium will augment their efforts to remove academic barriers to college entry, will provide incentives to educators, businesses, and students to increase youth work experience, and will increase the number of teachers who utilize service learning.
- The Long Beach Public Library will lead efforts to create a web-based registry of community service opportunities for youths.
- The City will conduct an annual "Service to Long Beach" celebration of citizens who have improved the lives of youngsters through community projects.

